

**REMARKS BY READ VAN DE WATER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AVIATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
PANAFRICAN-CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON AIR TRANSPORTATION
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
APRIL 9, 2002**

Good Morning:

**Honorable Ministers, Ambassador Young, Ms. Askey, Mr. Diaz,
leaders of Industry, delegates and honored guests - Welcome.**

**I bring you greetings from Secretary Mineta, who unfortunately
is unable to join us today.**

**Welcome to this historic meeting of American, African and
Caribbean leaders. I am honored to join this distinguished
group of leaders who share the common goal of a new,
prosperous United States - Africa and Caribbean partnership,
and who are now taking the bold, necessary steps to make that
goal a reality.**

**The world has changed substantially since September 11,
particularly in the aviation sector. I want to sincerely thank
everyone here for their notes of concern, and expressions of
sympathy. Your prayers, letters, phone calls, and e-mails
touched all of us.**

On that day -- our many friends around the world strengthened America. We remember well that one of the first calls that President Bush received following the terrorist acts, was from an African Head of State, offering his condolences and support for the American people.

Of course, it wasn't just a U.S. tragedy. More than 80 countries, including those in Africa and the Caribbean lost citizens along with us on September 11th. The United States is deeply grateful to all of the countries that have now joined in a great coalition against terror.

We share many challenges and now more than ever, and together we can meet them.

Those of us, who are in transportation and especially aviation, will never forget how our sector, with its rich history of bringing people, economies and cultures together, was used in this horrible act of violence. Now our resolve is deeper --- to create a safe and secure transportation system. This will contribute greatly to the well being of all who are members of the Global community. Free trade, and safe, secure and open skies are our goals.

Trade and transportation—they build upon and thrive on each other.

The Bush Administration has made it a priority to further develop our ties with Africa and the Caribbean. The Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act of 2000 and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000 are now being implemented. We are very excited about the economic opportunities that these packages provide. It is an exciting path we walk down as we work together to establish the economic development and political reforms that will open the doors of trade among all of our nations.

In October 2, President Bush hosted the first Africa Growth and Opportunity Act Forum to outline the past and future progress for increasing trade with Africa. The forum was delayed because of the events of September 11. However, as President Bush stated, "The conference was delayed by the events of September the 11th, but our common goals will not be delayed or denied. We have a unique opportunity to build ties of trade and trust that will improve the lives on both our continents. And we will seize this opportunity."

The Secretaries of State, Commerce, and Treasury, as well as the Trade and Finance Ministers from 35 Sub-Saharan countries, joined the President for this conference. The President has stated that increasing democracy and improving economic activity with Africa and the Caribbean is a clear priority for his Administration.

The President announced last month that the United States would increase its core development assistance by 50% over the next 3 years. This means an annual increase of \$5 billion over current levels. These additional funds will go to a new Millennium Challenge Account that will fund initiatives to help developing nations improve their economies. As you know, in a sound policy environment every dollar of aid attracts two dollars of private capital.

Of course, trade needs transportation to move. Safe, accessible transportation is imperative if we want to increase trade among our countries. Transportation is the connecting fabric, when woven properly, connects people to people and countries to prosperity. My colleagues have worked hard to develop an African transportation initiative that addresses aviation safety and security concerns in the Safe Skies for Africa Countries and the Open Skies agreements negotiated with our partners. The President, Secretary Mineta, and the entire Bush Administration are committed to enhancing this economic partnership with you.

The first ever US-Africa Transportation Ministerial held in September 1999, was a monumental event in the development of our partnership. The focus with the development of a vision for transportation integration to sustain growth and bring jobs, prosperity, and trade. The meeting was a huge success. 39 Countries were represented. We were graciously hosted by Atlanta and, for two days, deliberated the way forward. Atlanta

also hosted the first Pan African/Caribbean conference the same week. The timing of the events allowed many opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas,

This meeting builds on the first Ministerial. We return to Atlanta to renew our commitment to safe, secure, and open skies. Our meeting this week focuses on implementation and reform.

Clear choices are upon us.

One of the exciting opportunities before us is the possibility of using airports as the hubs for new trade corridors. Airports are huge job generators—vital economic engines for growth. But to attract tourists and other travelers, airports and air travel must be safe and secure. That's why the Safe Skies Initiative is so critically important.

In all sectors, but especially in the transportation sector, implementing reform can revive economies, create jobs, and save lives. The choices are sometimes difficult, but I'm confident that each of you will make the tough decisions to choose reform - to make tomorrow a better day, for your people, and indeed for the entire world. Implementing ICAO safety and security standards is prerequisite for increased trade, and a barometer for a nation's commitment to reform. Open, safe, and secure skies are crucial to economic development in Africa and the Caribbean.

Within the next year we hope to double the number of African countries that meet international aviation safety standards. We are your partners in safe skies, but we need you to undertake the necessary reform measures to make this partnership successful. Only then will our mutual goals become a reality.

One of our most successful activities has been our on-going effort to work with the newly democratic government of Nigeria to improve safety and security in aviation, as well as in other transportation sectors. I am happy to report that two weeks ago we approved a wet lease application to allow Nigeria Airways to continue flights to New York that had previously been conducted with South African Airways under a code share arrangement. This major hurdle was achieved because of the hard work of Nigeria in making reform, and the technical assistance provided by my team. That work will continue.

We also seek to improve airport security at multiple airports -- and to upgrade air navigation services throughout the African region. Working with the Department of State we have announced a multimillion-dollar effort to assist Safe Skies nations in improving security. This includes security surveys, purchasing of security equipment, and the training of security personnel. To improve aviation navigation, we are implementing a multi-million dollar effort to improve air navigation services, to include technical assistance and training for the Safe Skies countries.

In addition to Safe Skies, we are also seeking to liberalize aviation relations on a bilateral basis through Open Skies agreements. On this front we are making progress as well. We now have open skies agreements with 10 African countries. The first – Tanzania in 1999 – was followed by Namibia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Morocco, Rwanda, Benin, and Senegal. In the Caribbean we have negotiated three open skies agreements with Aruba and with Netherlands Antilles and with Jamaica for all-cargo. We look forward to many more, as Caribbean nations realized the advantages of open skies to increasing economic growth in their tourism-based economies.

We have already seen many new air service links between the United States and Africa in the past few years based on these agreements. Numerous African cities throughout the continent now receive code-share service provided by U.S. carriers with their European partners.

Delta Air Lines offers service to Morocco and South Africa with the national carriers of those countries, and has recently introduced direct service to Cairo. Ghana Airways now offers service to Baltimore and Ethiopian Airlines, whose government has indicated that they are favorably considering an open-skies agreement, is serving Washington, DC Dulles Airport. The development of these services has come about because countries have recognized the benefits of liberalization, not only to their airlines, but also to their entire economies.

We want to see these services grow and develop, and our Open Skies approach is making that happen. I am confident there will be new Open Skies Partners from Africa who are ready to join us as we explore new possibilities that will bring new opportunities.

It is imperative that we strengthen U.S.-Africa ties, for a prosperous democratic America needs prosperous democratic nations in Africa. We have a common goal that binds us to a common future.

At the U.S. Department of Transportation we are enthusiastically moving forward.

As President Nelson Mandela has said, "Though the challenges of the present time ... are greater than those we have already overcome, we face the future with confidence. We do so, despite the difficulties and the tensions that confront us, because there is in all of us the capacity to touch one another's hearts across the oceans and the continents."

The U.S.-Africa Partnership is creating new possibilities for peace and progress as we go forward in a new century and a new millennium. Our common goal is for African nations to reach the point of self-propelled development. We believe firmly that Safe Skies - Secure Skies- and Open Skies are key to Africa's access to the global market place. We are confident

that the reforms you undertake will move the nations of Africa into a time of unprecedented prosperity.

The future is ours. We can make it what we want. What we want is to see our many nations prosper in that future. Through our new partnership, by working together, we will ensure that no cowardly act, no person or organization will impede our new partnership. In closing, I would like to say that we - Ministers, Directors General, and transportation officials -- have the responsibility to make flying safe, secure and open for our people.

Let history record that we answered the call for freedom, prosperity, and security.

We want it---and we will get it.

Thank You.